



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, March 8, 2005

For Information Contact Public Affairs

SANDY RAYNOR

Telephone: (602) 514-7625

Cell: (602) 525-2681

SACATON WOMAN INDICTED FOR DIVERTING TRIBAL COLLEGE FUNDS

PHOENIX -- Jacqueline Boni of Sacaton, Ariz. was indicted by a federal grand jury on March 2, 2005. Boni, 55, was the Director of the Student Service Office for the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) Department of Education, responsible for administering the tribe's education scholarship program which was funded from casino revenues. She supervised students receiving GRIC scholarships for the University of Phoenix.

The 32-count indictment alleges that Boni directed the diversion of tuition refunds due the GRIC to former students, including herself, some of whom never enrolled in school and who were not eligible for the funds. She is also alleged to have misrepresented to the Education Committee, the eligibility of at least 13 people for scholarships in order to provide them with tribe money under the guise of subsistence scholarships. Some of those people were not enrolled at University of Phoenix. The indictment indicates a loss to GRIC of \$197,666.

Boni has been summoned to appear on March 16, 2005 for an arraignment on the charges before a U.S. Magistrate in Phoenix. The federal indictment charges Boni with violating Title 18 U.S. Code, Section 1163, Theft from an Indian Tribal Organization. A conviction for each count carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the FBI. The prosecution is being handled by Richard I. Mesh, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-176-PHX-MHM
RELEASE NUMBER: 2005-038

###